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## Christmas Gifts for '46

Mabel Bryan

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# CHRISTMAS GIFTS *for* '46



EXTENSION  
SERVICE

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE  
BROOKINGS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# Christmas Gifts For 1946

By MABEL BRYAN\*

There is "Peace on earth" again. This will be a merry Christmas complete with festive trimmings, family reunion, Christmas trees, and gifts for all. The difficulty in obtaining material has bettered very little during the past year; but by digging more deeply into the "piece boxes" and planning more carefully, Santa Claus will again have a full pack.

## Christmas For The Baby

### Dwarfie Booties

Knit soft woolen booties as an ideal gift for baby's first Christmas.

Knit a 5-inch square of fine white yarn with number 12 knitting needles. Forty-two stitches were put on the needle for the booties pictured. Complete the square by finishing it off the needle and fastening the thread securely. Fold the square diagonally. Sew the two lower edges together. Sew the other two edges together  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches beyond the square corner. Fold the open corner down to form the cuff on the front of the bootie. Make two ties by crocheting single chains 12 inches long. Weave ties around the opening at the top. Fasten fluffy pompons on each end of the ties. The booties stretch easily to fit the baby's foot.

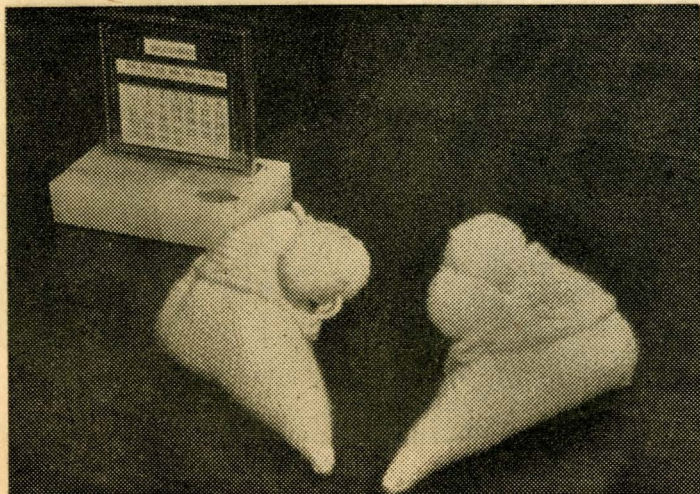
You can make bedroom slippers for older children simply by using coarser yarn and making larger squares. The lower edge measures  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches longer than the foot.

### A Net Cover For Baby Buggy or Crib

Make a net cover for buggy or crib to keep flies and mosquitoes away from the sleeping baby for a useful and dainty gift.

You can make the cover from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of cotton or rayon net or curtain material 54 or 72 inches wide. Turn a 2 or 3-inch hem toward the right side on all four sides. Miter the corners by folding without cutting the material. Finish hem line with a narrow lace edging or a simple stitching of wool yarn. Add three embroidered flowers of wool yarn in one corner, and sew a blue or pink ribbon above the embroidered design to add to the beauty of the cover.

Knitted Wool Booties Keep Baby's Feet Warm



\*Home Management Specialist



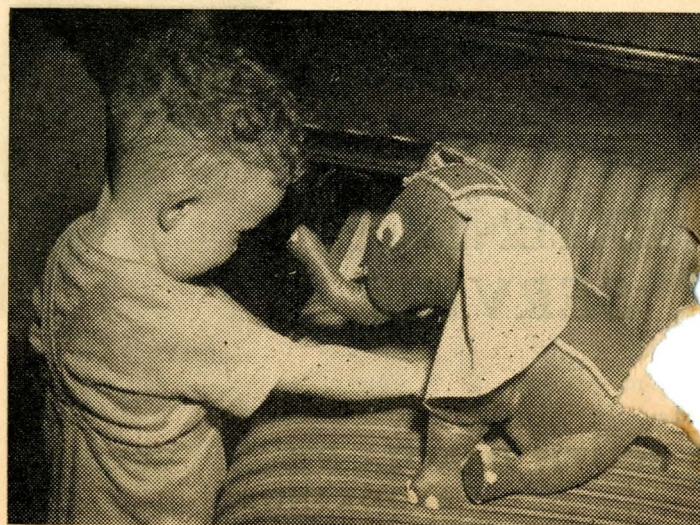
A Protective Cover for Crib or Buggy Made of Net

## For Boys And Girls

### Dumbo For The Little Boy

You can stuff an elephant  $11\frac{1}{4}$  inches high with floppy ears to delight any little boy. Make the body, head, and ears from a 27 by 40-inch piece of firmly woven gray cotton material such as twill or

Children Like Stuffed Toy Such as Dumbo





sateen. From a 12 by 16-inch piece of pink cotton print or plastic materials cut ears, mouth, facings, and nose. Make the eyes and nails from a piece of white felt 3 by 4 inches; the eyeballs of blue oilcloth or plastic materials. To give Dumbo a festive air, make a blanket and headpiece of red flannel or felt cut from a piece 6 by 9 inches. Stuff the body firmly with  $1\frac{3}{4}$  pounds of cotton batting. You will find a commercial pattern for the elephant.

## A Wheelbarrow Is Fun

You know how children like toys that can be pulled or pushed. You can make a wheelbarrow inexpensively from an apple box. Cut the sides to represent the child's favorite animal and paint in gay colors.

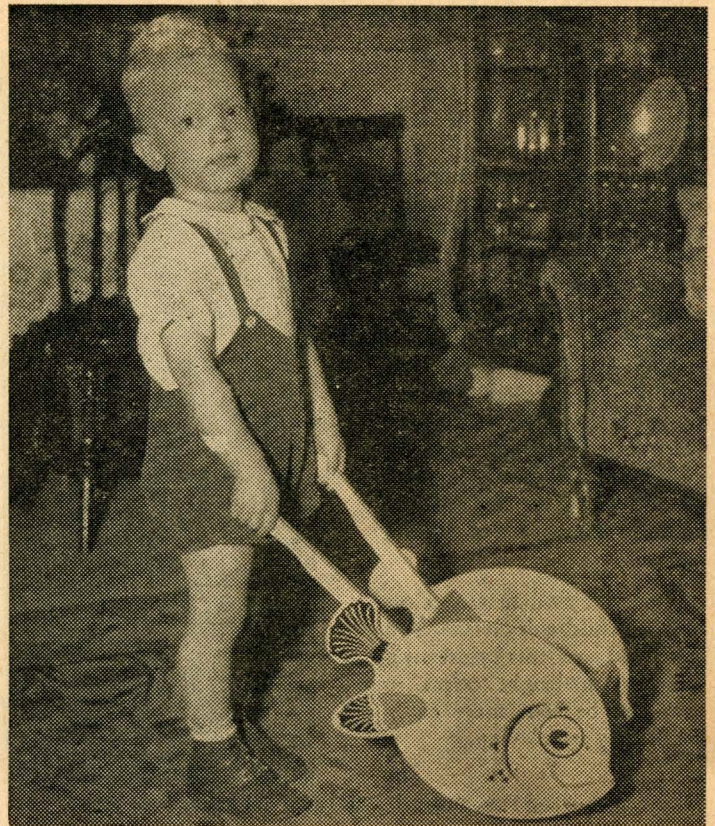
From the ends of the box cut the endpiece which measures  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches high; the bottom 7 by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches; and the wheel, 4 inches in diameter. Cut the sides of the wheelbarrow from the sides of the box. You can design the sides to represent fish, kittens, rabbits, dogs, or any animal which a child might like. Attach 21-inch handles made from 1-inch strips or dowels to each side of the wheel with a bolt or wooden pin. Fasten the sides to the bottom and end after they have been painted.

## A Doll

You can please any little girl with a 32-inch doll all soft and cuddly. Use outgrown children's clothes to dress her.

Make this doll of peach, tan, or flesh colored plastic material for the body, 3 pounds of cotton batting for stuffing, 2 ounces of knitting yarn for hair, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  yard of ribbon for tying the braids.

This Large Stuffed Doll Is Soft and Cuddly



A Wheelbarrow Can Be Made from an Apple Box

Sew all darts on body pieces as indicated on the pattern. The body is formed by three pieces. Seam the long body strip at piecing and match parts of eyes on this piece with rest of eyes on the two body pieces. Pin together wrong side out and seam with long body piece going down and around between the two side body pieces. Leave an opening in one seam for stuffing; slash edges on inside curves; turn and stuff; sew opening shut. Seam two pieces together for each leg and arm, seaming on wrong side. Turn and stuff.

Cover cardboard soles with material pieces and whip in place to bottom of the feet. Thread a large, heavy needle with stout cord, pulling it double and knotting the ends together. String legs onto each side of body, pushing needle through circles on each leg and lower part of body. Knot other ends of cord so that legs will be held firmly to body, yet are movable. Fasten buttons to the ends of the cord to keep knots from pulling through material. Join the arms in the same manner. Attach slightly padded ear to each side of head.

Tack strands of yarn along center line of head to form the braids. The strands of yarn are cut 26 inches long. To make curls, use yarn double in needle and pull it through dot on the head. Then wind it around two pencils 12 times; slip needle through loops and back into material and last loop. Continue in this way to make curls across front of the head.

The eyes and mouth are embroidered either before or after the body is stuffed.

Now dress the doll in the child's own outgrown clothes.



## A Cotton Play Dress

You can fashion a cute playsuit of cotton print or seersucker material for a little girl. You will find this garment simple to sew with its form-fitting waist, sweetheart neckline, and ruffled sleeves. The skirt and pantie are cut in one piece, wrap around and tie in front. Trim the edge of the skirt and pantie with a narrow ruffle. If ironing is a problem, you can use a binding of contrasting color for a finish instead of the ruffle. You will need  $2\frac{1}{4}$  yards of material for the four-year old size and three yards of ruffling for trim.

You will find bright colors best for children's clothes. You can avoid accidents by dressing children in bright colors so they can be seen more easily while they are playing.



A New and Nifty Play Suit with Pantie and Skirt in One Piece

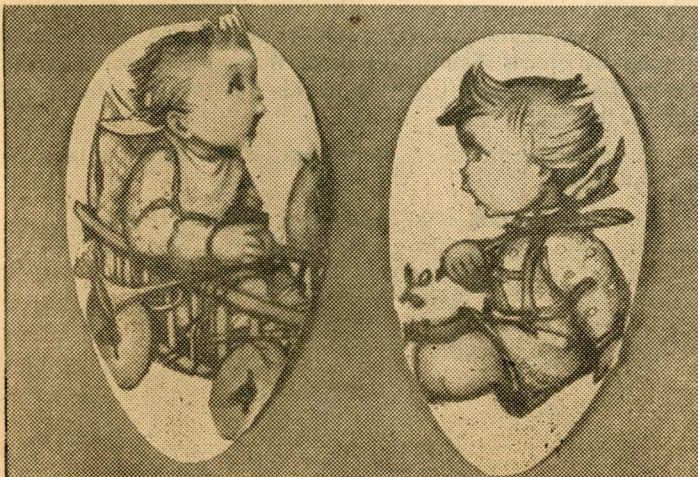
## Gifts for Everyone

### Plaster Of Paris Pins

You can make plaster pins with attractive designs for suitable gifts for friends who are young or old.

Make the pins from plaster of Paris. Cut out an attractive design or figure from a card or picture. Dip the design in water and press face down into the bowl of a spoon, cup, or bowl depending on the size or shape of pin you desire. Be sure there are no air bubbles under the design nor any wrinkles. The pins shown in the picture were molded in a tablespoon. Measure one tablespoonful of water into a cup. Add plaster of Paris to the water until it has absorbed all the

Plaster of Paris Was Used to Make These Pins



plaster possible, then add enough plaster to make a small dry mound extending above the water. Stir slightly. Fill the spoon with the design level full of the plaster mixture.

Let dry until firm enough to hold a safety pin in position for a fastener. When plaster is sufficiently dried it will slip out of the mold. Allow to dry thoroughly. Paint with shellac or clear nail polish.

### For A Suit

Not too tailored and not too dressy, just right for a suit are hand-made dickies you can make from scarves or small pieces of material. If you have a scarf not in use, make a simple dicky with sequin embroidery around the neckline. You may have a yard of embroidered insertion. Combine with plain material for a lovely dicky front.

### Bed Jacket

Make a warm bed jacket as an ideal gift for the friend who likes to read in bed or for someone who is ill.

Fashion the bed jacket from quilted rayon material and line with matching rayon crepe. You will find quilted rayon or cotton material in nearly all local stores. For light-weight jackets use cotton or rayon crepes, dimities, figured lawns.

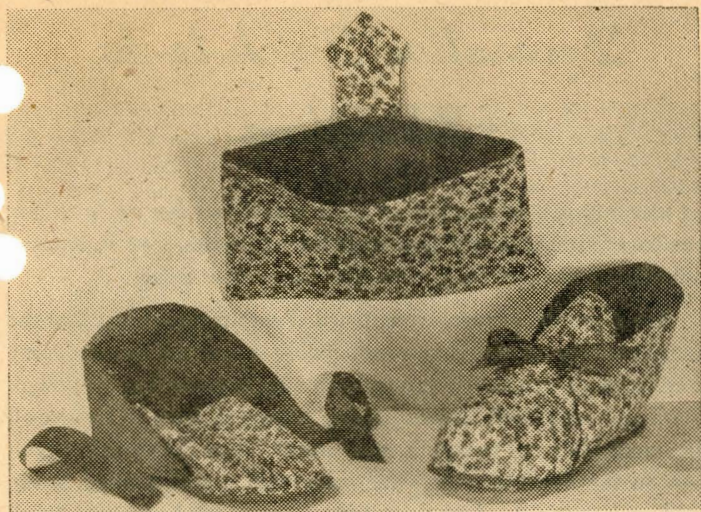
For this commercial pattern you need  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of 35-inch material and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of lining. Finish the edges with machine stitching on the right side.

Make a pair of bed shoes or bedroom slippers as a useful gift to give with the bed jacket. Make of the same material as the jacket.

A Quilted Bed Jacket for Reading in Bed







Cloth Bedroom Slippers Take Up Little Space in a Bag

## For the Traveler

### Soft Slippers For Boudoir Or Travel

If you have a friend or member of your family who travels, a pair of soft slippers in a small case would be a useful gift. Make the slippers from small scraps of material such as felt, rayons, prints, plastic, woolens, or quilted materials. You will need  $\frac{3}{8}$  yards of 28-inch material to make the slippers.

Make the soles of two thicknesses of material with an interlining of outing flannel or quilted padding. Quilt the soles by machine.

To make the upper part of the slipper join the center front and back seams, repeating for lining. Join lining to slipper back (right sides of material together), turn right side out and press. Join the lining to slipper front in same way. Lap slipper back over the front and stitch lower edges of back and front to the quilted sole. Bind the unfinished seam around sole with bias binding of matching or contrasting color. The ties may be ribbon or made from the lining material.

You will need  $\frac{1}{3}$  yard of material to make the case.

### A Cosmetic Bag

What could be more thoughtful than for you to make an attractive bag lined with colored plastic to be used as a cosmetic bag?

Make the bag shown from striped rayon taffeta. Interline the body of the bag with a thickness of outing flannel and line with contrasting colored plastic material. On each side of the bag put three pockets for cosmetics. Make a small case of the plastic material for the damp washcloth and tuck inside the bag. Complete each part of the bag separately then stitch together on the right side. Stitch the loops for the draw string on the outside of the bag.

You will need  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a yard of material for the outside and the same amount for interlining, and 1 yard of plastic to make the lining, pockets, and case for the washcloth.

### Protectors For Rainy Weather

A plastic scarf to tie on your head when caught out in the rain can save your "newly done" hairdo.

Cut a yard square of plastic material across diagonally to make two scarves. Pink the edges with a pinking shears or finish with a narrow hem.

Add to this attractive gift a hat protector to match the scarf. Use a piece of plastic 18 inches wide by 28 inches long accordin pleated in  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pleats. Sew narrow ties on each end.

When the rain comes pouring down and you are wearing your best hat, just stretch this protector over the hat and tie under your chin and continue on your way.

You will find a plastic case containing the two kinds of protectors will make clever gifts for young and old.

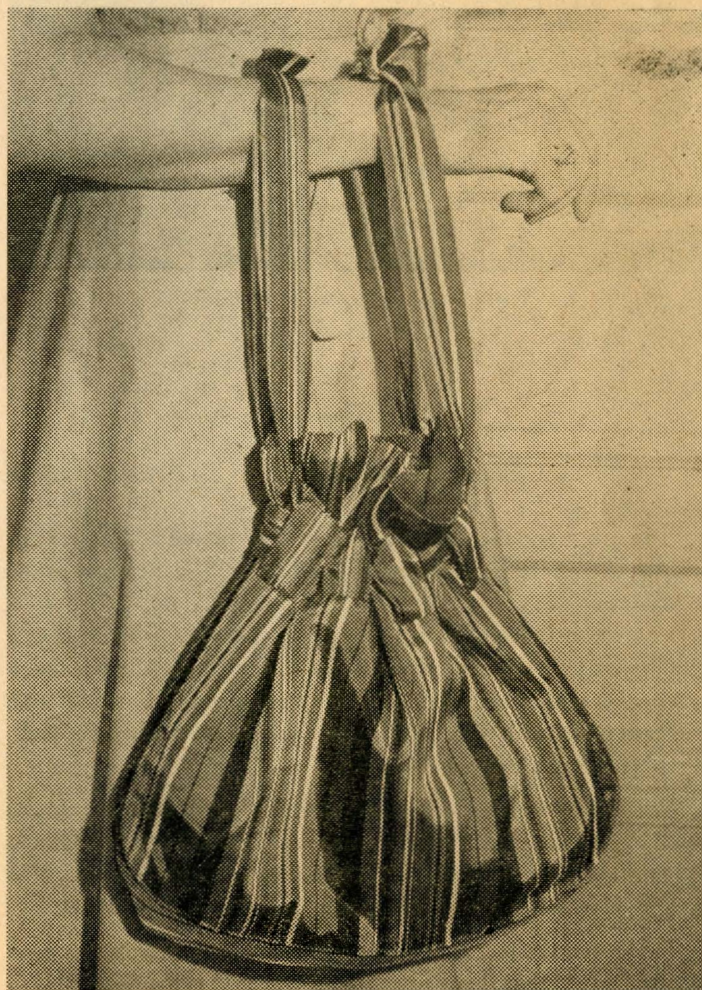
### A Hat Bag Made Of Plastic

Make of colorful plastic a bag to protect a hat from dust and dirt on the closet shelf or in the car.

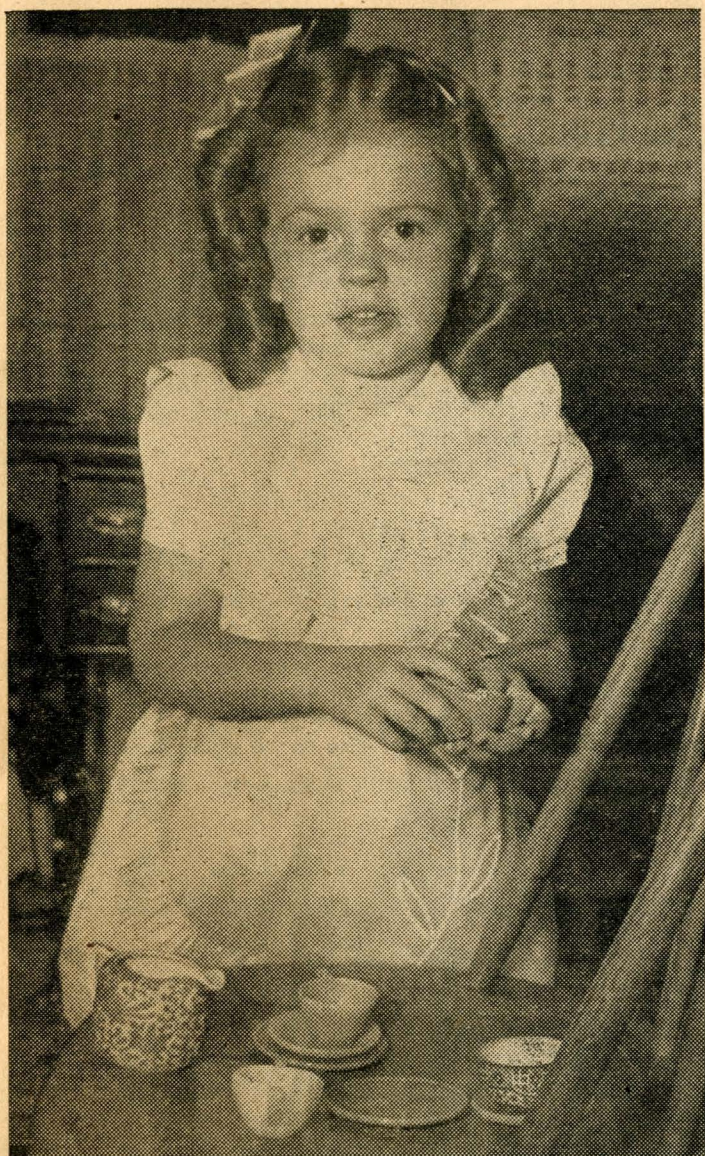
Cut a circle 12 inches in diameter. Seam together at ends a piece  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards long by 15 inches wide. Sew one side to the circle, easing in the fullness. Make a half-inch tuck 2 or 3 inches from the top for the drawstrings. Use three yards of heavy cord or ribbon for strings.

This bag can be folded into a small package and carried in a purse.

A Cosmetic Bag with Plastic Lining







A Plastic Sweetheart Apron for a Little Girl

## A Child's Plastic Apron

Wouldn't you like to delight a little girl with a sweetheart apron of dainty plastic?

You can make the apron from 1 yard of plastic and 3 yards of ruffling to trim the heart-shaped bib and skirt. Pink the edges of the ties.

You can make very practical and attractive bibs from this same plastic material. For a particularly useful one, make the bib like a little jacket with short sleeves. Cut the front a couple of inches long and turn up to catch the crumbs. Leave the bib open down the back. Bind in contrasting or matching tape.

For a child who has graduated to sitting at the table to eat, you could make a big place mat of plastic to save mother laundry. Or you might make a whole tablecloth of sheer, clear plastic material. The design, color, and fabric are not hidden by this clear protector.

Other useful bibs can be made from terrycloth, muslin, the good pieces of an old shirt, huck toweling, or bleached sacks.

## Decorative Quick-to-do Stenciling

Stenciling is a fascinating art craft which you can apply to any number of articles such as household linens, dresses, scarves, blouse, children's clothes, greeting cards, and many other things.

Articles in the pictures were stenciled with textile paints. Cut the stencil patterns on stencil paper obtainable at most art and stationery stores. Make a separate pattern for each color to be used in the design. Wash and press cloth before applying pattern in order to remove all the starch filler and to shrink the material. Place the stencil in position on the material. Apply the color with a stiff bristled brush, holding it vertically. Keep very little color in the brush and brush from the outside of the design to the center. Shade with darker colors on edges to emphasize parts. Dry cloth with painted design at least 24 hours. Set color by steam pressing.

## Luncheon Cloth

From a 1-yard square of plain cotton material or nicely bleached feed sacks make a serviceable luncheon cloth that stencils well. Put a simple design in each corner or a continuous motif around the center area. Finish the edges of the cloth with a narrow hem or fringed edge. Stencil the napkins in one corner with part of the design used on the luncheon cloth.

An apron and a luncheon cloth shown in the picture are well-adapted to stenciling.

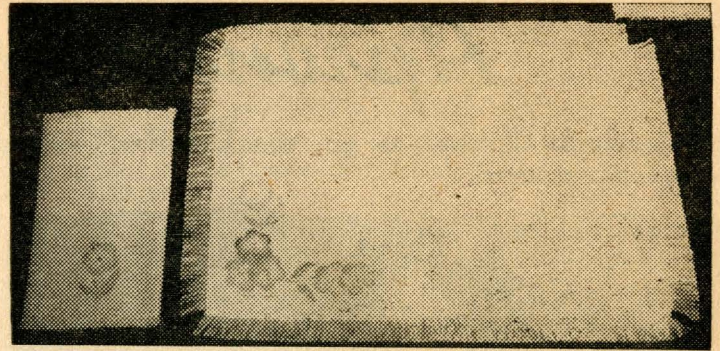
An Apron and Cloth with Stenciled Textile Paint Trim





## Place Mat Set

You can decorate place mats with a simple stenciled design. To make the mats use 1 yard of 54-inch material for the set or use two feed sacks. Cut four pieces 14 inches wide by 20 inches long. Draw a thread 1 inch from the edge all the way around. Stitch on the machine with matching thread in the space where the threads were drawn. Fringe the outer edges up to the line of stitching. The napkins were made the same way with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch fringe. Cut the napkins by 12 inches, making them rectangular in shape. A runner for the center of the table can be made in the same way or four small squares to use as protecting pads.



Stenciling with Textile Paint Trims Household Linens

## Sequins Attractive Trim For Gifts

Embroidering a simple design with colorful sequins will make a plain colored scarf an attractive gift. You can purchase sequins in department and variety stores for attractive trim for blouses, dresses, hats, purses, and printed scarves. To do sequin embroidery follow the simple instructions.

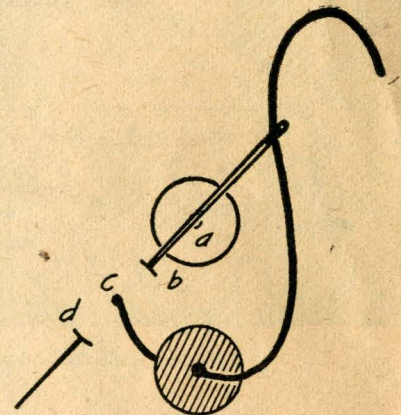
### Sequin Embroidery

When you sew on sequins, use matching thread. Mark the design with light lines.

Fasten the end of the thread on the underside of the material. Bring the needle up through the material to the right side on the line of the design. Place the first sequin on the needle right side up, letting it fall in place on the material. Push the needle down through the material at the lower edge of the first sequin calling this point B. The needle is brought up at point C, one-half the diameter of the sequin below point B.

Thread the second sequin on the needle right side down. Place the point of the needle down at point B, bringing the needle up at a distance one-half the diameter of the sequin below point C. Draw up the

thread, and the sequin will fall in place right side up, overlapping the first one put on. Continue in the same manner for the remaining sequins as for the second one put on.



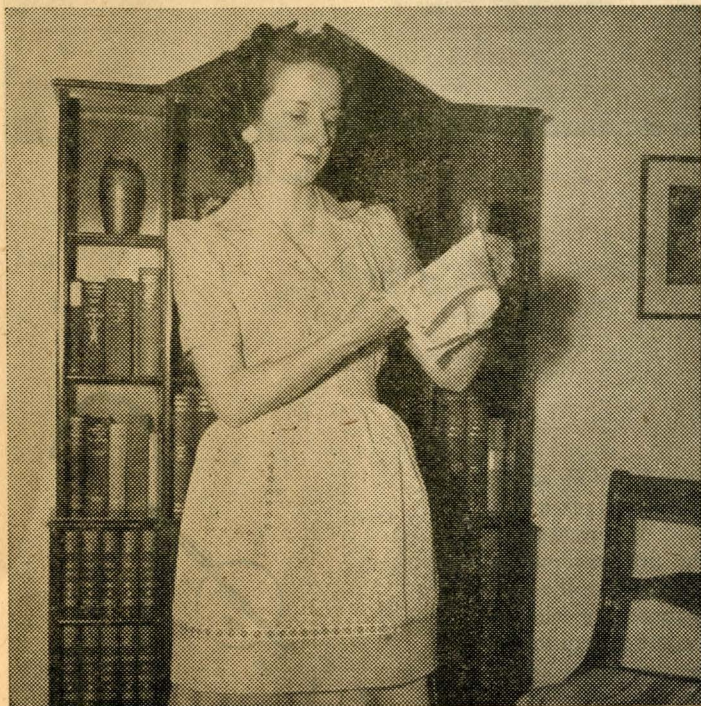
A Sequin-Trimmed Scarf to Add Color to the Wardrobe





# Aprons, Christmas Style

Aprons for Christmas are gifts your friends will welcome. You can make simply designed and practical ones from small amounts of material.



An Apron Made Colorful with Braid

## Tie-Around Apron

Make this simple apron from small scraps of material. You make the hem, pockets, and ties of a contrasting material. Stitch colorful braid over the hem line and around the pocket.

Make the skirt 16 inches long and 33 inches wide and gather into a 20-inch band at the waist. Fashion the hem of contrasting material  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide finished. Make the belt of two thicknesses 2 inches wide finished, and ties 24 inches long and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide. Finish the ties with a narrow hem. Make the pocket 6 inches wide and 5 inches deep. Use  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of braid for trimming.

Using dainty print or organdy you can make a delightful apron for any woman.

## Cover-All Apron

Make a large cover-all apron for a welcome gift for any housewife. When you are getting that Sunday dinner after coming home from church it is well to have an apron to protect your dress.

You use  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of material for the large size,  $7\frac{1}{8}$  yards of tape or rickrack for trimming. The back extends down from the shoulders and buttons on the corners of the skirt.

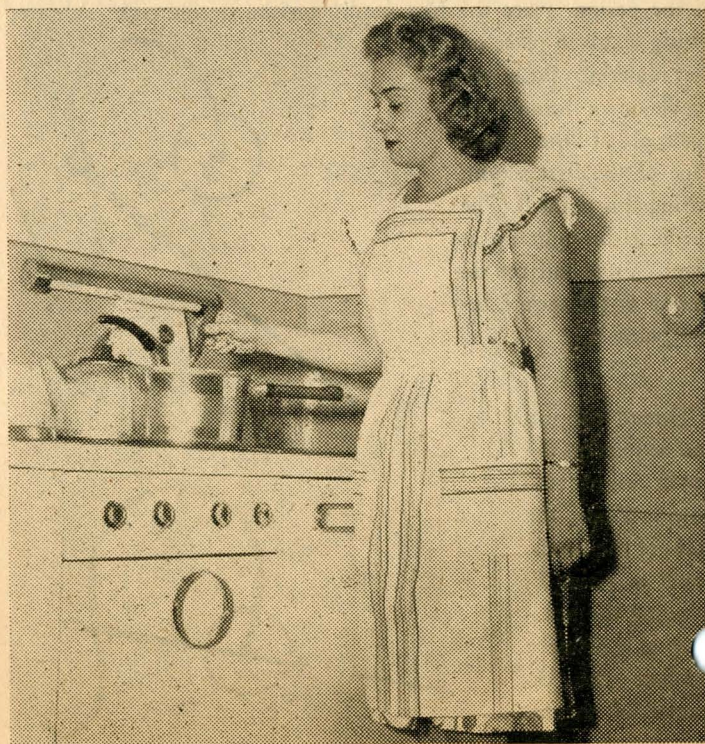
## Toweling Apron

Make this apron from striped toweling for a colorful and useful gift. With material scarce you will find it an excellent idea. Stitch two lengths of toweling together and gather into a band which ties around the waist. Cut the bib in three pieces so that the stripes will outline the three edges of the bib. Bring the straps over the shoulder to a back piece to form a T. Make two large pockets to add to the decoration.

You will need 2 yards of toweling for the apron,  $\frac{1}{8}$  yard of 35-inch fabric for the straps and ties.



An Apron That Covers the Dress



Striped Toweling Makes This Apron



## Tie-Around Apron Trimmed With Colored Tabs

Because small aprons are a favorite during this postwar period in which materials are so hard to get, you will find tie-around aprons made attractive with unusual trimmings a good gift idea. In the picture you see a plain colored apron trimmed with tabs of contrasting color. Make the tabs on the skirt and band by folding a 4-inch square material over diagonally to form a triangle. Fold the triangle through the center once again to make a smaller triangle with unfinished edges on the bottom. For the pocket trim use a 2-inch square, folding as you did the larger one.

## Apron With Handkerchief Pockets

Use two colorful handkerchiefs with one corner of each knotted to form pouchy pockets on a plain colored bib apron. The apron shown is yellow, the handkerchiefs have borders of brown and yellow and a brown center. Add a row of narrow brown rickrack to tie the color scheme together.

Cross the straps over the shoulders in the back and draw the ties through stitched loops at the ends of the straps. For this commercial pattern you will need  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of material for the apron,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of rick-rack for the trimming, and two medium-sized handkerchiefs for the pockets.

## Pleated Apron

You will find a well-fitting apron is appreciated by any woman on your gift list. Try this simple one that fits smoothly and covers the dress well with three pleats on both sides for style and fullness.

Get 30 inches of 36-inch material to make this apron. Use a dainty dotted swiss, small print, or organdy, and trim with narrow lace around the edge for daintiness. Add the necessary pocket.



Red Tabs for an Interesting Trim on a White Apron



Apron with Handkerchiefs Making the Pockets



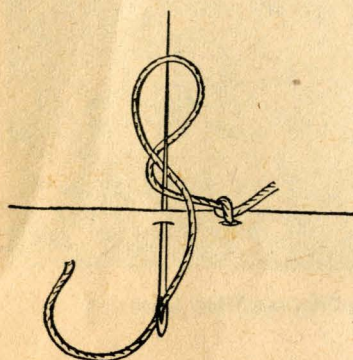
A Dainty Apron with Pleats on the Side for Fullness



## Armenian Knot Lace

Many lace and embroidery designs have come to us from foreign countries. From Armenia we have copied the Armenian knot lace. Make this dainty trim for handkerchiefs, dickeys, baby garments, and fine linens. Follow the directions given below:

In making the Armenian knot lace with a needle, always work from right to left. Fasten the thread with three little running stitches in the edge of the hem. Stick the needle through from the right side of the hem to the back, bringing the single thread across the needle from the right side to the left. Bring the double thread from the back of the needle around the point under the needle from the right, pulling the needle up perpendicular to the edge of the hem. Thus you form the first knot.



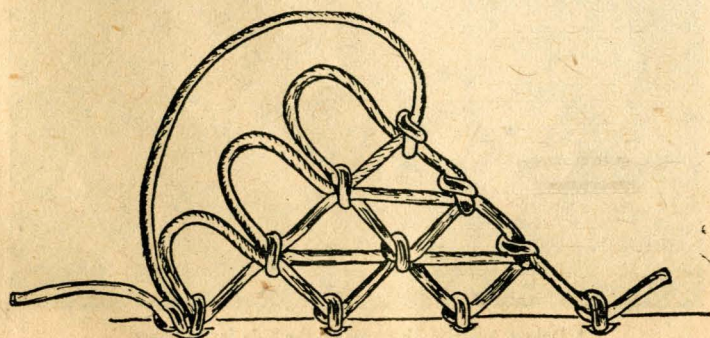
Stick the needle through from the right to the wrong side  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from the first knot, making the knot as before by placing the single thread from right to left over the top of the needle, the double thread from right to left back and under the needle, pulling up the knot as before. You then have two knots and one loop. Repeat in the same manner, making four knots and three loops.

### Second Row

Always working from right to left, bring the single thread from the last knot made across the top of the three loops. Leave enough slack to form a decorative loop at the side. Place the needle under the first loop made from the right side toward the wrong. The single thread is over the needle, therefore bring the double thread back under the needle from right to left, pulling the needle up perpendicular to the loop, forming a knot in the center of the first loop of the first row. Continue across by placing the needle under the second and third loop made in the first row. Each time make the knot by placing the single thread over the needle, the double thread back and under the needle from right to left and pulling the thread up perpendicular to the center of the loop. Continue across. You now have two new loops formed in the second row across with the loose thread forming a large decorative loop at the side.

### Third Row

Lay single thread across the top of the two loops in the second row leaving enough slack to form decorative loop at the side. Place the needle under the first loop made in the second row, making a knot as before. Continue the same with the second loop of the second row. You now have one loop in the third row. To complete the pyramid lay single thread across the top of the loop in the third row, leaving



enough slack to form the third decorative loop on the side. Stick the needle from the front to the back through the one loop on the third row and make a knot as before. Complete the pyramid by bringing the thread to the left of the pyramid with enough slack to form a graceful loop. Stick the needle through the same place as the last knot was made in the first row making a knot. You are then ready to repeat and make another pyramid.

## To All A Merry Christmas

Sweets from your kitchen will bring Christmas cheer to all members of the family. Save a little sugar for something extra at this time of the year. If you have a gift problem, you can rest assured that an attractively packed box of "Apple Delights" and "Glazed Nuts" will please the receiver. The recipes are as follows:

### APPLE DELIGHT

4 cups apple pulp (Jonathans or Winesaps are best)	3 cups nuts (less will do) chopped fairly fine
4 cups sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon rose water or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon orange extract
4 tablespoons gelatine-softened in 1 cup water	or 1 teaspoon lemon juice

For apple pulp, cut apples and cook until tender. Put through a sieve. To the pulp add sugar and cook until very thick (200-218 F.) so that when dropped from a spoon it retains its shape. Remove from the stove and add gelatin that has been soaked in cold water. Mix well. See that it is thoroughly dissolved. Add nuts and rose water or orange extract or lemon juice, when mixture is slightly cool. Pour into buttered pans about  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick. When firm, cut into pieces and roll in powdered sugar.

### GLAZED NUTS

1 cup sugar	Pinch cream of tartar
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water	Cook to hard crack stage (300 degrees F.)

Drop the nut meats into the syrup one at a time (or several together for clusters). Remove with fork, draining off excess syrup. Place on oiled paper to cool. If the pan is removed from fire and set in another pan of hot water while dipping is done, the syrup will not harden too quickly.

## Christmas Gifts From The Farm Kitchen

You will not find a perfect gift for everybody; but all good gifts have this in common, they bear a heart-warming message from the giver.

What could be a more pleasant surprise than something from the farm kitchen? How sweet the giving, when part of yourself goes with the gift.

Such gifts might be:

1. One or two dozen eggs for the friend who lives in town.
2. A pound of home-made butter packed in a glass bowl and all tied up with colored ribbon.
3. A nice fat chicken dressed all ready for the pan would bring smiles in many a family.
4. From your field of popcorn you might have gifts for many. Popcorn tastes good most any time.
5. A jar of home-rendered lard would be acceptable in many households.
6. Plants are traditional Christmas gifts, but you can make yours very special gift by decorating the pot.
7. Jars of jam or jelly if you have them to spare. Save this idea for the days ahead when we can again make them.
8. Jars of pickles or relishes cannot be wrong.
9. A loaf of home-made Christmas bread or Christmas cookies are so good.
10. Flower seeds done up in attractive packages can spread your gift throughout the year.



## Safety First

Christmas is a family festival, a time of reunion, of happiness. Don't let tragedy spoil that picture. Please don't use candles for tree trimmings. And please do check your tree lights. Poor wiring can be dangerous.

Keep your Christmas tree standing in water both to make it fire resistant and to keep it fresh. When you bring your Christmas tree home, make a diagonal cut at least an inch above the original cut end. Put the tree in water right away. Wood experts of the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say the fresher the tree, the more easily it takes up water. Keep the level of the water above the cut surface during the entire time you have the tree in the house. If it will be a few days before you are going to set up your tree, keep it in water in a cool place during that time.

## Greenery Decorations

If you can get some greenery and berries, make your own house and door decorations.

Wire strips of evergreen on a pliable wire, add some berries or clusters of Christmas tree balls. Use across the tops of windows and doors, letting the ends fall like a piece of drapery.

Take a long piece of evergreen and several short ones and wire together in a graceful spray. Add berries, gay colored balls, or some little silver colored Christmas bells for an effective door decoration. If you would like to do something for a neighbor in town, country, or apartment house, present them with one of these sprays. They have a festive Christmasy air.

If you use electric Christmas lights with these made-at-home decorations, be sure there are no bare wires.

For the big red bows so necessary to Christmas decorations, try strips cut from a yard of inexpensive bright red plastic material.

## Christmas Centerpieces

Need a centerpiece for your Christmas table? Try putting a layer of cotton in a flat bowl or on a small tray. Make some miniature trees with evergreen twigs stuck on wire frogs. Use figurines or some of those miniature candles that come in the shape of angels, Santas, and others. Sprinkle with artificial snow. A variety of combinations and landscaping ideas will present themselves as you work—a little piece of mirror for a frozen pond or a skating rink, some bright-colored pebbles for rocks, a china fawn for atmosphere, a celluloid deer from the play box for Santa's steed.

A floating candle centerpiece will be a conversation piece. Melt pieces of candles, add vegetable coloring if necessary. Set in molds. When almost firm, insert wicks, also reclaimed from old candles. Chill quickly. Rap mold to remove. Float in a glass dish partially filled with water. You can make the centerpiece even more effective by placing the bowl on a mirror or a large glass plate and surrounding the bowl with Christmas greens.

## Christmas Party

At your club's Christmas party you can play games, sing carols, and remember friends who can't attend.

You might start the meeting with each member writing a letter to a member who is ill, who has moved away, or to some friend who is away from home. Or you might send cards to those who are ill or away and have each member sign her name.

You can sing carols. An interesting musical game can be worked out with the titles of songs supplying part of the Christmas story. Instead of reading those words, you can play part of the song and let members write down its name. Award a prize to the one who gets the most names right.

For a little activity play Snowflake Tennis. Tie a string to two chair backs with the chairs as far apart as the room allows. Line teams up on opposite sides of the string. Have the referee toss a feather into the air. The teams must keep the feather in motion simply by blowing on it. If one team lets the feather drop or touches it, a point is scored for the other side. Ten points make a game.

You could plan a club project. Maybe it will be caroling the week before Christmas. You might plan to cooperate with another organization on some special project. You might pack a basket or two for a family who could stand a little boost.

End the party with refreshments served buffet style. Have a pretty centerpiece. You will find a couple of suggestions on this page.

## Christmas Everywhere

Christmas is truly an international affair. Each country may observe it differently, but each has contributed some part of what we now accept as the Christmas tradition.

The Christmas tree came from Germany. (The legend of the first Christmas tree would make a wonderful story to read Christmas Eve.) Santa Claus is a native of Asia Minor, with American modifications. Hanging socks in a row is an American tradition. England started the custom of sending Christmas cards. The Christmas carol came from Italy; the Christmas seal, from Denmark; and Mexico contributed the Christmas flower, the poinsettia.

The bringer of gifts varies with the country. In Spain the Holy Kings on their way to Bethlehem leave gifts in the shoes of all good children. In Hungary an angel comes through a window on Christmas Eve with tree and presents. When a bell rings everybody rushes in to see. In the Ukraine boys and men carry a lighted star from house to house singing carols. They are treated with cakes and coins. Russia's Saint Nickolas was the son of a very rich man who knew what everyone needed. He asked that those receiving his gifts should not tell about them. From this comes our "Do Not Open Until Christmas" custom.

## The Christmas Story

In all the rush of wrapping presents, cooking dinner, planning for guests, don't forget to remember the why of all the bustle.

From your New Testament read the Christmas story. Or read the favorite of the whole family, "The Christmas Carol." Or the haunting "The Fourth Wiseman" by Van Dyke. Perhaps one of the children would like to read the Christmas story from his or her Bible story book.

You might establish a family custom of reading one of the stories as part of the family's Christmas Eve observance.



## NOTES